

ENTOMOLOGICAL NEWS.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., MAY, 1914.

The Desirability of a Bibliographical Dictionary of Entomologists*.

Fifteen years ago, in locating and studying Burmeister's types of Odonata, it was desirable, as it is in all similar pieces of work, to ascertain the sources from which he had obtained his material, the original collectors, and the dates of the collecting, the successive owners into whose hands the specimens had passed and their fate subsequent to their examination and description by Burmeister. Such of this information as was obtained came after a protracted search through the few early references afforded by Hagen's *Bibliotheca Entomologica* and by papers by authors later than Burmeister which treated of any of the species included in his *Handbuch* of 1839.

Five years ago, in preparing an annotated list of the localities and collectors of Odonata in Mexico and Central America, for the introduction to the Neuroptera volume of the *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, no precise information was acquired as to the parts of those countries visited by such men as Deppe or McNiel, and even in the case of de Saussure it was not complete.

It is not only as to collectors and fate of collected material that data are often needed. It is frequently highly desirable to know when, where and under what conditions the describers, the monographers, the systematists did their work, since such information throws light, in many cases, on the results of their labors and on the views which they adopted. At this present time we wish to know something of the personal history of Brackenridge Clemens, a pioneer in the study of the

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American Microlepidoptera. We know that he died in January, 1867, but the *Zoological Record* and the American entomological and zoological journals of that and the immediately following years have, so far, not furnished any references to the existence of anything more than a very brief biographical sketch. In searching for such a reference, we came across a short account of the Nicaraguan expedition of McNiel, of which we were ignorant in 1908 when we most needed it.

These concrete examples show the desirability of a bibliographical dictionary of entomologists, not merely as a matter of historical interest, but as an important guide to the comprehension of the work of our predecessors. By entomologists we mean not only those who have published on insects but also all who have collected or formed collections, including under the latter head public museums.

Such a dictionary as we suggest should contain as far as possible, the following information under each entry:

1. The dates and places of birth and death.
2. The periods and places of activity as collector, writer, etc.
3. The sources of the material which the subject, if a writer, employed.
4. The subsequent fate of the subject's personal collections.
5. Especially and superlatively important, references to any published biographical notices, bibliographies and critical estimates of the subject, if a person. If a Museum, references to historical accounts of the institution, published lists of collections and types contained, etc.

On account of the interrelations of entomologists and different parts of the world, the scope of the dictionary should be world-wide.

We have *not* in contemplation the preparation of such a dictionary. The chief object of this paper is to call the attention of some one who is bibliographically inclined, and who has leisure on his hands, to a field which lies ready to be tilled. Such a philanthropic author must expect difficulty in finding a publisher for his book when the manuscript has been com-

pleted. To lessen this difficulty, the paragraph devoted to each entry should be as brief as possible, particularly where published information already exists and references to it can be given. This dictionary is conceived of as a work of reference, a guide to sources, not as a compilation of all that is known or may be gleaned from the existing literature.

The task of preparation is not a light one, to be accomplished in two or three years. It will require many years, access to large and complete libraries and the exercise of wise judgment to produce a satisfactory result along the lines indicated. It will be worth the doing, however, and therefore is brought to the attention of entomologists.

Notes and News

ENTOMOLOGICAL GLEANINGS FROM ALL QUARTERS OF THE GLOBE.

Ambulyx strigilis L. in Florida (Lep.).

Mr. Morgan Hebard has presented to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia a specimen of *Ambulyx strigilis* Linn., taken at Miami, Dade Co., Florida, February 2, 1899. It would be of interest to know whether this species is a visitor to Florida or a resident there. This sphinx moth is found in the West Indies and South America.—HENRY SKINNER.

Side Lights on Entomology.

"To an outsider it looks as though the subject of entomology were still largely in the taxonomic stage of development, which is not to be wondered at when one recalls that over half the species of animals are insects."—M. A. CHRYSLER, Professor of Botany, University of Maine, in *Science* for March 13, 1914, page 377.

". . . what has chiefly contributed to the progress of Odonatology during the period under review [1895-1912] is the application of the developmental method as a means of tracing the origin, and so comprehending the significance, of the various parts of the Odonate's body. If the application of this method to these insects seems to students of other animal classes to have been slow, the excuse must be the great number of insect forms, the consequent great mass of detail to be mentally digested, and the relatively smaller number of investigators."—P. P. CALVERT, in *Transactions, 2nd International Congress of Entomology*, Oxford, 1912, page 157, Oct. 14, 1913.